

The Tragedy of
HAMLET
Prince of Denmark

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Adapted by Ezra Flam
for Belmont High School
Performing Arts Company
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CHARACTERS

CLAUDIUS, *King of Denmark*

GERTRUDE, *Queen of Denmark*

HAMLET, *Prince of Denmark*

POLONIUS, *Chief Councilor to Claudius*

LAERTES, *Polonius' son*

OPHELIA, *Polonius' daughter*

GHOST OF KING HAMLET

HORATIO, *Hamlet's friend*

ROSENCRANTZ, *Hamlet's friend*

GUILDENSTERN, *Hamlet's friend*

FORTINBRAS, *Prince of Norway*

CAPTAIN, *a captain in Fortinbras' army*

FIRST PLAYER

PLAYER KING

PLAYER QUEEN

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

SECOND GRAVEDIGGER

SOLDIERS & ATTENDANTS TO THE KING & QUEEN

BERNARDO

MARCELLUS

CORNELIUS

VOLTIMAND

OSRIC

ATTENDANT

PRIEST

MESSENGER

ACT I, SCENE I

EL SINORE, OUTSIDE THE CASTLE

FRANCISCO at his post. Enter BERNARDO.

BERNARDO
Who's there?

MARCELLUS
Nay, answer me. Stand, and unfold yourself.

BERNARDO
Long live the king!

MARCELLUS
Bernardo?

BERNARDO
He.

MARCELLUS
You come most carefully upon your hour.

BERNARDO
'Tis now struck twelve. Say-
What, is Horatio there?

HORATIO
A piece of him.

BERNARDO
Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.

MARCELLUS
What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

BERNARDO
I have seen nothing.

MARCELLUS

Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
and will not let belief take hold of him.
Therefore I have entreated him along
with us to watch the minutes of this night;
that if again this apparition come,
he may approve our eyes and speak to it.

HORATIO

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

BERNARDO

Sit down awhile,
and let us once again assail your ears
what we have two nights seen.

HORATIO

Well, sit we down,
and let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Enter GHOST

MARCELLUS

Peace, break thee off. Look, where it comes again!

BERNARDO

In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

MARCELLUS

Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.

BERNARDO

Looks it not like the king? Mark it, Horatio.

HORATIO

Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder.

BERNARDO

It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS

Question it, Horatio.

HORATIO

What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,
together with that fair and warlike form
in which the majesty of buried Denmark
did sometimes march? By heaven I charge thee, speak!

MARCELLUS

It is offended.

BERNARDO

See, it stalks away!

HORATIO

Stay! Speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

Exit GHOST

MARCELLUS

'Tis gone, and will not answer.

BERNARDO

How now, Horatio! You tremble and look pale.
Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you on't?

HORATIO

Before my God, I might not this believe
without the sensible and true avouch
of mine own eyes.

MARCELLUS

Is it not like the king?

HORATIO

As thou art to thyself.

'Tis strange.

MARCELLUS

Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,
with martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

HORATIO

This bodes some strange eruption to our state.
But soft, behold! Lo, where it comes again!

Enter GHOST

I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!

If thou hast any sound or use of voice,
speak to me.

If there be any good thing to be done,
that may to thee do ease and grace to me,
Speak to me.

Cock crows

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
which, happily, foreknowing may avoid, O, speak!
Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.

Exit Ghost

MARCELLUS

'Tis gone!

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
to offer it the show of violence,
for it is, as the air, invulnerable,
and our vain blows malicious mockery.

BERNARDO

It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

HORATIO

But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill.
Break we our watch up; and by my advice,
let us impart what we have seen tonight
unto young Hamlet, for, upon my life,
this spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

MARCELLUS

Let's do't, I pray, and I this morning know
where we shall find him most conveniently.

Exit MARCELLUS, BERNARDO, HORATIO

ACT 1, SCENE 2

A ROOM INSIDE THE PALACE

*Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, HAMLET, POLONIUS,
LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS and ATTENDANTS*

CLAUDIUS

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
the memory be green, and that it us befitted
to bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
to be contracted in one brow of woe,
yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
that we with wisest sorrow think on him
together with remembrance of ourselves.

Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
the imperial jointress to this warlike state,
have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,
with mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
in equal scale weighing delight and dole,
taken to wife.

Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,
holding a weak supposal of our worth,
he hath not failed to pester us with message,
importing the surrender of those lands
lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
to our most valiant brother. We have here writ
to Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,
(who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
of this his nephew's purpose) to suppress
His further gait herein. We here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

CORNELIUS & VOLTIMAND

In that and all things will we show our duty.

Exit VOLTIMAND & CORNELIUS

CLAUDIUS

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
You told us of some suit, what is't, Laertes?
The head is not more native to the heart,
the hand more instrumental to the mouth,
than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

LAERTES

My dread lord,
your leave and favor to return to France,
from whence though willingly I came to Denmark,
to show my duty in your coronation,
yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
my thoughts and wishes bend again toward France
and bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

CLAUDIUS

Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

POLONIUS

He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
by laboursome petition, and at last
upon his will I sealed my hard consent.
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

CLAUDIUS

Take thy fair hour, Laertes. Time be thine,
and thy best graces spend it at thy will!
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son--

HAMLET *[aside]*

A little more than kin, and less than kind.

CLAUDIUS

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET

Not so, my lord, I am too much i' the sun.

GERTRUDE

Good Hamlet, cast thy nightéd color off,
and let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy veiled lids
seek for thy noble father in the dust.
Thou know'st 'tis common, all that lives must die,
passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET

Ay, madam, it is common.

GERTRUDE

If it be,
why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET

Seems, madam! Nay it is. I know not "seems."
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
nor customary suits of solemn black,
no, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
nor the dejected 'havior of the visage
that can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
for they are actions that a man might play,
but I have that within which passeth show,
these but the trappings and the suits of woe.

CLAUDIUS

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
to give these mourning duties to your father.
But, you must know, your father lost a father;
that father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound
in filial obligation for some term
to do obsequious sorrow. But to persever

in obstinate condolment is a course
of impious stubbornness, 'tis unmanly grief.
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
an understanding simple and unschooled.
We pray you, throw to earth
this unprevailing woe, and think of us
as of a father, for let the world take note,
you are the most immediate to our throne,
and with no less nobility of love
than that which dearest father bears his son,
do I impart toward you. For your intent
in going back to school in Wittenberg,
it is most retrograde to our desire,
and we beseech you, bend you to remain
here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

GERTRUDE

Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet.
I pray thee, stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

CLAUDIUS

Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
sits smiling to my heart. Come away.

Exit all but HAMLET

HAMLET

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt
thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
or that the Everlasting had not fixed
his canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
seem to me all the uses of this world!

Fie on't! Ah fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden
that grows to seed, things rank and gross in nature
possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead. Nay, not so much, not two.
So excellent a king that was, to this,
Hyperion to a Satyr. So loving to my mother
that he might not beteem the winds of heaven
visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Let me not think on't. Frailty, thy name is woman!
O, God! A beast, that wants discourse of reason
would have mourned longer. Married with my uncle,
my father's brother, but no more like my father
than I to Hercules. Within a month,
ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
had left the flushing in her galléd eyes,
she married. O, most wicked speed, to post
with such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not nor it cannot come to good.
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO

HORATIO

Hail to your lordship!

HAMLET

I am glad to see you well.

Horatio, or I do forget myself.

HORATIO

The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

HAMLET

Sir, my good friend, I'll change that name with you.

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?

HORATIO

A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAMLET

I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
against yourself. I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?

HORATIO

My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

HAMLET

I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow student,
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

HORATIO

Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

HAMLET

Thrift, thrift, Horatio! The funeral baked meats
did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father! Methinks I see my father.

HORATIO

Where, my lord?

HAMLET

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HORATIO

I saw him once, he was a goodly king.

HAMLET

He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

HORATIO

My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAMLET

Saw? Who?

HORATIO

My lord, the king your father.

HAMLET

The king my father!

HORATIO

Season your admiration for awhile
with an attent ear, till I may deliver,
upon the witness of these gentlemen,
this marvel to you.

HAMLET

For God's love, let me hear.

HORATIO

Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
been thus encountered: a figure like your father,
appears before them, and with solemn march
goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walked
by their oppressed and fear-surprised eyes.
And I with them the third night kept the watch,
where, as they had delivered, true and good,
the apparition comes. I knew your father,
these hands are not more like.

HAMLET

But where was this?

MARCELLUS

My lord, upon the platform where we watched.

HAMLET

Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO

My lord, I did,

But answer made it none.

HAMLET

'Tis very strange.

HORATIO

As I do live, my honored lord, 'tis true.

HAMLET

Hold you the watch tonight?

BERNARDO

We do, my lord.

HAMLET

I will watch tonight,

Perchance 'twill walk again.

HORATIO

I warrant it will.

HAMLET

If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
and bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,

if you have hitherto concealed this sight,
let it be tenable in your silence still.
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

ALL
Our duty to your honor.

Exit all but HAMLET

HAMLET
My father's spirit in arms! All is not well.
I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul, foul deeds will rise,
though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

Exit HAMLET

ACT 1, SCENE 3

A ROOM IN POLONIUS' HOUSE

Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA

LAERTES

My necessaries are embarked, farewell.
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
and convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
but let me hear from you.

OPHELIA

Do you doubt that?

LAERTES

For Hamlet and the trifling of his favor,
hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
a violet in the youth of primy nature,
forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting.

OPHELIA

No more but so?

LAERTES

Think it no more.
Perhaps he loves you now, but you must fear,
his greatness weighed, his will is not his own.
For he himself is subject to his birth,
and therefore must his choice be circumscribed
unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Yea, if he says he loves you,
then weigh what loss your honor may sustain,
if with too credent ear you list his songs,
or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
to his unmastered importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
and keep you in the rear of your affection,
out of the shot and danger of desire.

OPHELIA

I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
as watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
whiles, like a puffed and reckless libertine,
himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
and recks not his own rede.

LAERTES

O, fear me not.
I stay too long, but here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS

POLONIUS

Yet here, Laertes! Aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stayed for. There: my blessing with thee!
And these few precepts in thy memory
see thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice.
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
for loan oft loses both itself and friend,
and borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine ownself be true,
and it must follow, as the night the day,
thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell. My blessing season this in thee!

LAERTES

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POLONIUS

The time invites you, go, your servants tend.

LAERTES

Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well
What I have said to you.

OPHELIA

'Tis in my memory locked,
and you yourself shall keep the key of it.

LAERTES

Farewell.

Exit LAERTES

POLONIUS

What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

OPHELIA

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

POLONIUS

Marry, well bethought.

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
given private time to you, and you yourself
have of your audience been most free and bounteous.
What is between you? Give me up the truth.

OPHELIA

He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
of his affection to me.

POLONIUS

Affection! Pooh! You speak like a green girl,
unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

OPHELIA

My lord, he hath importuned me with love
in honorable fashion.

POLONIUS

Ay, fashion you may call it. Go to, go to.

OPHELIA

And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
with almost all the holy vows of heaven.

POLONIUS

Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
when the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
lends the tongue vows. These blazes, daughter,
you must not take for fire. From this time
be somewhat scater of your maiden presence.
Set your entreatments at a higher rate
than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,
believe so much in him, that he is young
and with a larger tether may he walk
than may be given you. This is for all:
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
have you so slander any moment leisure,
as to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.

OPHELIA

I shall obey, my lord.

Exit POLONIUS and OPHELIA

ACT 1, SCENE 4

OUTSIDE THE CASTLE

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS

HAMLET

The air bites shrewdly, it is very cold.
What hour now?

HORATIO

I think it lacks of twelve.

HAMLET

No, it is struck.

HORATIO

Indeed? I heard it not. Then it draws near the season
wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

HORATIO

Look, my lord, it comes!

Enter GHOST

HAMLET

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,
bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
thou comest in such a questionable shape
that I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, Father, Royal Dane: O, answer me!

GHOST beckons HAMLET

HORATIO

It beckons you to go away with it,
as if it some impartment did desire
to you alone.

MARCELLUS

Look, with what courteous action
it waves you to a more removed ground.
But do not go with it.

HORATIO

No, by no means.

HAMLET

It will not speak; then I will follow it.

HORATIO

Do not, my lord.

HAMLET

Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee.
It waves me forth again, I'll follow it.

HORATIO

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
and there assume some other horrible form,
which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
and draw you into madness? Think of it.

HAMLET

It waves me still.
Go on, I'll follow thee.

MARCELLUS

You shall not go, my lord.

HAMLET

Hold off your hands.

HORATIO
Be ruled, you shall not go.

HAMLET
Unhand me, gentlemen.
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!
I say, away! Go on, I'll follow thee.

Exit GHOST and HAMLET

HORATIO
He waxes desperate with imagination.

MARCELLUS
Let's follow, 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

HORATIO
Have after. To what issue will this come?

MARCELLUS
Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HORATIO
Heaven will direct it.

MARCELLUS
Nay, let's follow him.

*Exit HORATIO & MARCELLUS
Enter GHOST and HAMLET*

HAMLET
Where wilt thou lead me? Speak, I'll go no further.

GHOST
Mark me.

HAMLET
I will.

GHOST

My hour is almost come,
when I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
must render up myself.

HAMLET

Alas, poor ghost!

GHOST

Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
to what I shall unfold.

HAMLET

Speak: I am bound to hear.

GHOST

I am thy father's spirit,
doomed for a certain term to walk the night,
and for the day confined to fast in fires,
till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
to tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
and each particular hair to stand on end;
but this eternal blazon must not be
to ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love,
revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET

Murder!

GHOST

Murder most foul, as in the best it is,
but this most foul, strange and unnatural.
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
a serpent stung me. So the whole ear of Denmark
is by a forged process of my death
rankly abused. But know, thou noble youth,
the serpent that did sting thy father's life
now wears his crown.

HAMLET

O my prophetic soul! My uncle!

GHOST

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
with witchcraft of his wit, won to his shameful lust
the will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
But, soft! Methinks I scent the morning air;
brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
with juice of curséd hebona in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
the leperous distilment, whose effect
holds such an enmity with blood of man
that swift as quicksilver it courses through
the natural gates and alleys of the body.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatched.
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
with all my imperfections on my head.
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
a couch for luxury and damnéd incest.
Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.

Exit GHOST

HAMLET

O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain.
O villain, villain, smiling, damnéd villain!
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain.

MARCELLUS *[offstage]*

Lord Hamlet--

HORATIO *[offstage]*

Heaven secure him!

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS

MARCELLUS

How is't, my noble lord?

HORATIO

What news, my lord?

HAMLET

O, wonderful!

HORATIO

Good my lord, tell it.

HAMLET

There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark
but he's an arrant knave.

HORATIO

These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.
There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave
to tell us this.

HAMLET

Why, right; you are i' the right;
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you.
For your desire to know what is between us,
o'ermaster 't as you may. And now, good friends,
give me one poor request.

HORATIO

What is't, my lord? We will.

HAMLET

Never make known what you have seen tonight.

HORATIO & MARCELLUS

My lord, we will not.

GHOST [*unseen*]

Swear.

HAMLET

Ah, ha, boy! Say'st thou so? art thou there, truepenny?
Come on--you hear this fellow in the cellarage--
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword,
Never to speak of this that you have heard,
Swear by my sword.

HORATIO

O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAMLET

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come,
here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
how strange or odd soe'er I bear myself
(as I perchance hereafter shall think meet

to put an antic disposition on)
that you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
with arms encumbered thus, or this headshake,
or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
as "Well, well, we know," or "We could, an if we would,"
or such ambiguous giving out, to note
that you know aught of me. This not to do,
so grace and mercy at your most need help you. Swear.

GHOST [*unseen*]
Swear.

HORATIO & MARCELLUS
In faith my lord, not I.

HAMLET
Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!
So, gentlemen, let us go in together.

Exit HORATIO & MARCELLUS

The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
that ever I was born to set it right!

Exit HAMLET

ACT 2, SCENE 1

A ROOM IN POLONIUS' HOUSE

Enter POLONIUS and OSRIC

POLONIUS

Give him this money and these notes.

OSRIC

I will, my lord.

POLONIUS

You shall do marvelous wisely
before you visit him, to make inquire
of his behavior.

OSRIC

My lord, I did intend it.

POLONIUS

Marry, well said, very well said. Look you then,
take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him
as thus, "I know his father and his friends,
and in part him, but" you may say "Not well,
but, if't be he I mean, he's very wild"

OSRIC

My lord, that would dishonor him.

POLONIUS

That's not my meaning. But breathe his faults so quaintly
that they may seem the taints of liberty,
the flash and outbreak of a fiery mind.

OSRIC

But, my good lord—

POLONIUS

Wherefore should you do this?

OSRIC

Ay, my lord, I would know that.

POLONIUS

Marry, sir, here's my drift,
and I believe, it is a fetch of wit:
your party in converse, him you would sound,
"Good sir," or so, or "friend," or "gentleman,"
and then, sir, does he this—he does— what was I
about to say? By the mass, I was about to say
something: where did I leave?

OSRIC

At "friend or so," and "gentleman."

POLONIUS

Ay, marry.
He closes thus: "I know the gentleman,
I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,
or then, or then, with such, or such, and, as you say,
I saw him enter such a house of sale,
a brothel, or so forth." So see you now,
your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth
and thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
by indirections find directions out.
You have me, have you not?

OSRIC

My lord, I have.

POLONIUS

God be wi' you, fare you well.
How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

Exit OSRIC, Enter OPHELIA

OPHELIA

O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

POLONIUS

With what, i' the name of God?

OPHELIA

My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,
no hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
ungartered, and down-gyved to his ankle,
pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
and with a look so piteous in purport
as if he had been loosed out of hell
to speak of horrors-- he comes before me.

POLONIUS

Mad for thy love?

OPHELIA

My lord, I do not know,
but truly, I do fear it.

POLONIUS

What said he?

OPHELIA

He took me by the wrist and held me hard,
then goes he to the length of all his arm
and, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
he falls to such perusal of my face
as he would draw it. Long stayed he so,
at last, a little shaking of mine arm.
and thrice his head thus waving up and down,
he raised a sigh so piteous and profound
as it did seem to shatter all his bulk

and end his being. That done, he lets me go,
and, with his head over his shoulder turned,
he seemed to find his way without his eyes,
for out o' doors he went without their helps,
and, to the last, bended their light on me.

POLONIUS

This is the very ecstasy of love,
whose violent property fordoes itself
and leads the will to desperate undertakings.
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

OPHELIA

No, my good lord, but, as you did command,
I did repel his fetters and denied
his access to me.

POLONIUS

That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted him. I feared he did but trifle.
This must be known, which, being kept close, might move
more grief to hide than hate to utter love.

Exit POLONIUS & OPHELIA

ACT 2, SCENE 2

A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, ROSENCRANTZ,
GUILDENSTERN, and ATTENDANTS*

CLAUDIUS

Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!
Moreover that we much did long to see you,
the need we have to use you did provoke
our hasty sending. Something have you heard
of Hamlet's transformation. So call it,
sith nor the exterior nor the inward man
resembles that it was. What it should be,
I cannot dream of. I entreat you both
to draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
that, opened, lies within our remedy.

GERTRUDE

Good gentlemen, he hath much talked of you,
and sure I am two men there are not living
to whom he more adheres. If it will please you
as to expend your time with us awhile,
your visitation shall receive such thanks
as fits a king's remembrance.

ROSENCRANTZ

Both your majesties
might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
put your dread pleasures more into command
than to entreaty.

GUILDENSTERN

But we both obey,
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent
to lay our service freely at your feet.

CLAUDIUS

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

GERTRUDE

Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz,
and I beseech you instantly to visit
my too much changed son. Go, some of you,
and bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Exit ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and some ATTENDANTS.

Enter POLONIUS

POLONIUS

The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
are joyfully returned.
and I do think, or else this brain of mine
hunts not the trail of policy so sure
as it hath used to do, that I have found
the very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

CLAUDIUS

O, speak of that, that do I long to hear.

POLONIUS

Give first admittance to the ambassadors.
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

CLAUDIUS

Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

Enter VOLTIMAND & CORNELIUS

Welcome, my good friends!
Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

VOLTIMAND

Most fair return of greetings and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress

his nephew's levies, which to him appeared
to be a preparation 'gainst the Polack.

CORNELIUS

But, better looked into, sends out arrests
on Fortinbras, which he, in brief, obeys,
with an entreaty, herein further shown,
that it might please you to give quiet pass
through your dominions for his enterprise,
so levied as before, against the Polack.

CLAUDIUS

It likes us well.
Go to your rest, at night we'll feast together.
Most welcome home!

Exit VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS

POLONIUS

This business is well ended.
My liege, and madam, to expostulate
what majesty should be, what duty is,
why day is day, night night, and time is time,
were nothing but to waste night, day and time.
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
and tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief: your noble son is mad.
Mad call I it, for, to define true madness,
what is't but to be nothing else but mad?
But let that go.

GERTRUDE

More matter, with less art.

POLONIUS

That he is mad, 'tis true. 'Tis true, 'tis pity.
Mad let us grant him, then, and now remains
that we find out the cause of this effect,
or rather say, the cause of this defect,
for this effect defective comes by cause.
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus. Perpend.
I have a daughter--have while she is mine--
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this: now gather, and surmise.

[reading]

"To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia."

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; "beautified" is
a vile phrase: but you shall hear. Thus:

[reading]

*"Doubt thou the stars are fire;
Doubt that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt I love."*

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me,
and my young mistress thus I did bespeak:
"Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;
This must not be." And then I precepts gave her,
that she should lock herself from his resort,
admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
which done, she took the fruits of my advice,
and he, repulsed (a short tale to make)
fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,
into the madness wherein now he raves
and all we mourn for.

CLAUDIUS

Do you think 'tis this?

GERTRUDE

It may be, very likely.

CLAUDIUS

How may we try it further?

POLONIUS

You know, sometimes he walks four hours together here in the lobby.

GERTRUDE

So he does indeed.

POLONIUS

At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him.
Be you and I, behind an arras, then
mark the encounter: if he love her not
and be not from his reason fallen thereon,
let me be no assistant for a state,
but keep a farm and carters.

CLAUDIUS

We will try it.

GERTRUDE

But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

CLAUDIUS

Sweet Gertrude, leave us.
Her father and myself, lawful espials,
will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,
we may of their encounter frankly judge
if 't be the affliction of his love or no
that thus he suffers for.

GERTRUDE

I shall obey you.

And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
that your good beauties be the happy cause
of Hamlet's wildness. So shall I hope your virtues
will bring him to his wonted way again,
to both your honours.

OPHELIA

Madam, I wish it may.

POLONIUS

Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves.

I hear him coming, let's withdraw, my lord.

Exit GERTRUDE. CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS

Enter HAMLET

HAMLET

To be, or not to be: that is the question.
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
and by opposing end them? To die, to sleep;
no more. And by a sleep to say we end
the heartache and the thousand natural shocks
that flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;
to sleep: perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub.
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
when we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
must give us pause. There's the respect
that makes calamity of so long life,
for who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
the pangs of despised love, the law's delay,

the insolence of office and the spurns
that patient merit of the unworthy takes,
when he himself might his quietus make
with a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
to grunt and sweat under a weary life,
but that the dread of something after death,
the undiscovered country from whose bourn
no traveller returns, puzzles the will
and makes us rather bear those ills we have
than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
and thus the native hue of resolution
is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
and enterprises of great pitch and moment
with this regard their currents turn awry,
and lose the name of action. Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
be all my sins remembered.

OPHELIA

Good my lord,
how does your honor for this many a day?

HAMLET

I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

OPHELIA

My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
that I have longéd long to redeliver.
I pray you, now receive them.

HAMLET

No, not I, I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA

My honored lord, you know right well you did.
Take these again, for to the noble mind
rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.

HAMLET

Ha, ha! Are you honest?

OPHELIA

My lord?

HAMLET

Are you fair?

OPHELIA

What means your lordship?

HAMLET

That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to
your beauty. I did love you once.

OPHELIA

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAMLET

You should not have believed me. I loved you not.

OPHELIA

I was the more deceived.

HAMLET

Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am
myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it
were better my mother had not borne me. Go thy ways to a nunnery.
Where's your father?

OPHELIA

At home, my lord.

HAMLET

Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool nowhere but in's own house. Farewell.

OPHELIA

O, help him, you sweet heavens!

HAMLET

Get thee to a nunnery, go, farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell.

OPHELIA

O heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET

Go to, I'll no more on't, it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live, the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

Exit HAMLET

OPHELIA

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
the expectancy and rose of the fair state,
the observed of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
that sucked the honey of his music vows,
now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth
blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me,
to have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Enter CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS

CLAUDIUS

Love! His affections do not that way tend.
Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little,
was not like madness. There's something in his soul,
o'er which his melancholy sits on brood,
and I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
will be some danger.

POLONIUS

How now, Ophelia!
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said,
We heard it all. Away, I do beseech you
both, away. I'll board him presently.

*Exit CLAUDIUS & OPHELIA.
Enter HAMLET, reading.*

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAMLET

Well, God-a-mercy.

POLONIUS

Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET

Excellent well, you are a fishmonger.

POLONIUS

Not I, my lord.

HAMLET

Then I would you were so honest a man.

POLONIUS

Honest, my lord!

HAMLET

Ay, sir, to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

POLONIUS

That's very true, my lord.

HAMLET

Have you a daughter?

POLONIUS

I have, my lord.

HAMLET

Let her not walk i' the sun. Conception is a blessing, but as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to 't.

POLONIUS *[aside]*

How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter, yet he knew me not at first, he said I was a fishmonger: he is far gone, far gone. I'll speak to him again.

What do you read, my lord?

HAMLET

Words, words, words.

POLONIUS

What is the matter, my lord?

HAMLET

Between who?

POLONIUS

I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

HAMLET

Slanders, sir, for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams. All which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

POLONIUS *[aside]*

Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't.
Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

HAMLET

Into my grave.

POLONIUS

Indeed, that is out o' the air. *[aside]* How pregnant sometimes his replies are! My honorable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

HAMLET

You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal. Except my life, except my life, except my life.

POLONIUS

Fare you well, my lord.

HAMLET

These tedious old fools!

Exit POLONIUS. Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

GUILDENSTERN

My honored lord!

ROSENCRANTZ

My most dear lord!

HAMLET

My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz!
Good lads, how do ye both?

ROSENCRANTZ

As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUILDENSTERN

Happy, in that we are not over-happy. On fortune's cap we are not the very
button.

HAMLET

Nor the soles of her shoe?

ROSENCRANTZ

Neither, my lord.

HAMLET

Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favors?

GUILDENSTERN

'Faith, her privates we.

HAMLET

In the secret parts of fortune? O, most true, she is a strumpet. What's the
news?

ROSENCRANTZ

None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

HAMLET

Then is doomsday near. But your news is not true. Let me question more in
particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of
fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

GUILDENSTERN

Prison, my lord!

HAMLET

Denmark's a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ

We think not so, my lord.

HAMLET

Why, then, 'tis none to you, for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison.

ROSENCRANTZ

Why then, your ambition makes it one, 'tis too narrow for your mind.

HAMLET

O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

ROSENCRANTZ

To visit you, my lord, no other occasion.

HAMLET

Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me. Come, come, nay, speak.

GUILDENSTERN

What should we say, my lord?

HAMLET

Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to color. I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ

To what end, my lord?

HAMLET

That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

ROSENCRANTZ [*aside to Guildenstern*]

What say you?

HAMLET [*aside*]

Nay, then, I have an eye of you. If you love me, hold not off.

GUILDENSTERN

My lord, we were sent for.

HAMLET

I will tell you why. So shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen molt no feather. I have of late—but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises, and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory. What a piece of work is a man: how noble in reason; how infinite in faculty; in form and moving how express and admirable; in action how like an angel; in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals. And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me.

No, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

ROSENCRANTZ

My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

HAMLET

Why did you laugh then, when I said “man delights not me”?

ROSENCRANTZ

To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you.

HAMLET

What players are they?

ROSENCRANTZ

Even those you were wont to take delight in: the tragedians of the city.

Flourish of trumpets

GUILDENSTERN

There are the players.

HAMLET

Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. You are welcome: but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

GUILDENSTERN

In what, my dear lord?

HAMLET

I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Enter POLONIUS

POLONIUS

Well be with you, gentlemen! My lord, I have news to tell you.

HAMLET

My lord, I have news to tell you.

POLONIUS

The actors are come hither, my lord.

HAMLET

Buz, buz!

POLONIUS

Upon mine honor--

HAMLET

Then came each actor on his ass.

POLONIUS

The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light.

HAMLET

O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

POLONIUS

What a treasure had he, my lord?

HAMLET

Why, one fair daughter and no more, the which he loved passing well.

POLONIUS *[aside]*

Still on my daughter.

Enter PLAYERS

HAMLET

You are welcome, masters, welcome, all. I am glad to see thee well. Come, give us a taste of your quality, come, a passionate speech.

FIRST PLAYER

What speech, my lord?

HAMLET

I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted, or, if it was, not above once. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido, and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line.

FIRST PLAYER

*The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,
hath now his dread and black complexion smeared
with heraldry more dismal. Head to foot
now is he total gules, horridly tricked
with blood of father's, mothers, daughters, sons,
baked and impasted with the parching streets
that lend a tyrannous and a damnéd light
to their lord's murder. Roasted in wrath and fire—*

POLONIUS

This is too long.

HAMLET

It shall to the barber's, with your beard. Prithee: come to Hecuba.

FIRST PLAYER

But who, O, who had seen the mobléd queen--

POLONIUS

That's good. "Mobléd queen" is good.

FIRST PLAYER

*Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames
With bisson rheum, a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teeméd loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up.
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steeped,
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced:*

*But if the gods themselves did see her then
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamor that she made,
Unless things mortal move them not at all,
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
And passion in the gods.*

POLONIUS

Look, whether he has not turned his color and has tears in's eyes. Pray you, no more.

HAMLET

'Tis well: I'll have thee speak out the rest soon. Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time. After your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

POLONIUS

Come, sirs.

HAMLET

Follow him, friends, we'll hear a play tomorrow.

Exit POLONIUS with all the PLAYERS but the SECOND

Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

SECOND PLAYER

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

We'll ha't tomorrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

SECOND PLAYER

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

Very well. Follow that lord, and look you mock him not.

Exit PLAYER

My good friends, I'll leave you till night. You are welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ

Good my lord!

Exit ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

HAMLET

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
but in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
could force his soul so to his own conceit
for Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
that he should weep for her? What would he do,
had he the motive and the cue for passion
that I have? He would drown the stage with tears
and cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
yet I, a muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
and can say nothing; no, not for a king,
upon whose property and most dear life
a damned defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? Breaks my pate across?
Tweaks me by the nose? Gives me the lie i' the throat,
as deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha, 'swounds, I should take it. For it cannot be
but I am pigeon-livered and lack gall.
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
that I, the son of a dear father murdered,
prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
and fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
a scullion! Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain!

I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play
have by the very cunning of the scene
been struck so to the soul that presently
they have proclaimed their malefactions.
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
with most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
play something like the murder of my father
before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks,
I'll tent him to the quick. If he but blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
may be the devil, and the devil hath power
to assume a pleasing shape, yea, and perhaps
abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds
more relative than this: the play 's the thing
wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

Exit HAMLET

ACT 3, SCENE 1

A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

*Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, POLONIUS,
ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN*

CLAUDIUS

And can you, by no drift of circumstance,
get from him why he puts on this confusion,

ROSENCRANTZ

He does confess he feels himself distracted,
but from what cause he will by no means speak.

GUILDENSTERN

But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
when we would bring him on to some confession
of his true state.

GERTRUDE

Did he receive you well?

ROSENCRANTZ

Most like a gentleman.

GUILDENSTERN

But with much forcing of his disposition.

GERTRUDE

Did you assay him to any pastime?

GUILDENSTERN

Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
we o'er-raught on the way. Of these we told him,
and, as I think, they have already order
this night to play before him.

POLONIUS

'Tis most true.

and he beseeched me to entreat your majesties
to hear and see the matter.

CLAUDIUS

With all my heart, and it doth much content me
to hear him so inclined.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
and drive his purpose on to these delights.

ROSENCRANTZ

We shall, my lord.

Exit ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN and GERTRUDE

CLAUDIUS

I have in quick determination
thus set it down. He shall with speed to England,
haply the seas and countries different
with variable objects shall expel
this something-settled matter in his heart,
What think you on't?

POLONIUS

My lord, do as you please,
but, if you hold it fit, after the play
let his queen mother all alone entreat him
to show his grief. Let her be round with him,
and I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear
of all their conference. If she find him not,
to England send him.

CLAUDIUS

It shall be so:

Madness in great ones must not unwatched go.

Exit CLAUDIUS & POLONIUS

ACT 3, SCENE 2

A HALL IN THE CASTLE

Enter HAMLET and PLAYERS

HAMLET

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently, for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.

First Player

I warrant your honor.

HAMLET

Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature. For any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Go, make you ready.

Exit PLAYERS. Enter POLONIUS.

How now, my lord! I will the king hear this piece of work?

POLONIUS

And the queen too, and that presently.

HAMLET

Bid the players make haste.

Enter HORATIO

HAMLET

What ho! Horatio!

HORATIO

Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAMLET

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
as e'er my conversation coped withal.
There is a play to-night before the king:
one scene of it comes near the circumstance
which I have told thee of my father's death.
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
observe mine uncle: if his occulted guilt
do not itself unkennel in one speech,
it is a damnéd ghost that we have seen.

HORATIO

Well, my lord.

HAMLET

They are coming to the play; I must be idle.
Get you a place.

*Trumpet flourish. Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, POLONIUS,
OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and ATTENDANTS*

CLAUDIUS

How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAMLET

Excellent, i' faith, of the chameleon's dish. I eat the air, promise-crammed.

CLAUDIUS

I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet. These words are not mine.

HAMLET

No, nor mine now. Be the players ready?

ROSENCRANTZ

Ay, my lord, they stay upon your patience.

GERTRUDE

Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET

No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

POLONIUS [*To CLAUDIUS*]

O, ho! Do you mark that?

HAMLET [*Lying at OPHELIA's feet*]

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

OPHELIA

No, my lord.

HAMLET

I mean, my head upon your lap?

OPHELIA

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA

I think nothing, my lord.

HAMLET

That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

OPHELIA

What is, my lord?

HAMLET
Nothing.

OPHELIA
You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET
What should a man do but be merry? For, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

OPHELIA
Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET
So long? O heavens! Died two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year.

Enter FIRST PLAYER

FIRST PLAYER
*For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.*

Exit PLAYER

HAMLET
Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

OPHELIA
'Tis brief, my lord.

HAMLET
As woman's love.

Enter PLAYER KING AND PLAYER QUEEN

PLAYER KING

*Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground,
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.*

PLAYER QUEEN

*So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!*

PLAYER KING

*'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do.
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honoured, beloved; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou--*

PLAYER QUEEN

*O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast:
In second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second but who killed the first.
A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.*

PLAYER KING

*I do believe you think what now you speak;
But what we do determine oft we break.
So think thou wilt no second husband wed;
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.*

PLAYER QUEEN

*Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!
Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!*

HAMLET

If she should break it now!

PLAYER KING

*'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile;
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep.*

PLAYER KING sleeps

PLAYER QUEEN

*Sleep rock thy brain,
And never come mischance between us twain!*

Exit PLAYER QUEEN

HAMLET

Madam, how like you this play?

GERTRUDE

The lady protests too much, methinks.

HAMLET

O, but she'll keep her word.

CLAUDIUS

What do you call the play?

HAMLET

The Mouse Trap. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna. Gonzago is the duke's name, his wife, Baptista. 'Tis a knavish piece of work, but what o' that? Your majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not. This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

Enter FIRST PLAYER

LUCIANUS

*Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.*

LUCIANUS pours the poison into the PLAYER KING'S ears

HAMLET

He poisons him i' the garden for's estate. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

OPHELIA

The king rises.

HAMLET

What, frightened with false fire!

GERTRUDE

How fares my lord?

POLONIUS

Give o'er the play.

CLAUDIUS

Give me some light: away!

ATTENDANTS

Lights, lights, lights!

Exit all but HAMLET and HORATIO

HAMLET

O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

HORATIO

Very well, my lord.

HAMLET

Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HORATIO

I did very well note him.

HAMLET

Ah, ha! Come, some music! Come, the recorders!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

GUILDENSTERN

Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

HAMLET

Sir, a whole history.

GUILDENSTERN

The king, sir, is in his retirement marvelous distempered.

HAMLET

With drink, sir?

GUILDENSTERN

No, my lord, rather with choler.

HAMLET

Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor, for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

GUILDENSTERN

Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame and start not so wildly from my affair.

HAMLET

I am tame, sirs: pronounce.

ROSENCRANTZ

The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

HAMLET

You are welcome.

ROSENCRANTZ

Then thus she says: your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

HAMLET

O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

ROSENCRANTZ

She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

HAMLET

We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

GUILDENSTERN

Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? You do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

HAMLET

Why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

GUILDENSTERN

O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

HAMLET

I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

GUILDENSTERN
My lord, I cannot.

HAMLET
I pray you.

GUILDENSTERN
Believe me, I cannot.

HAMLET
I do beseech you.

GUILDENSTERN
I know no touch of it, my lord.

HAMLET
'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb,
give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music.
Look you, these are the stops.

GUILDENSTERN
But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony. I have not the
skill.

HAMLET
Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play
upon me, you would seem to know my stops, you would sound me from my
lowest note to the top of my compass, and there is much music, excellent
voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you
think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you
will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS

POLONIUS
My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

HAMLET

Then I will come to my mother by and by. I will come by and by.

POLONIUS

I will say so.

HAMLET

By and by is easily said.

Leave me, friends.

Exit all but HAMLET

Tis now the very witching time of night,
when churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood,
and do such bitter business as the day
would quake to look on. Soft! Now to my mother.
Let me be cruel, not unnatural.
I will speak daggers to her, but use none.

Exit HAMLET

INTERMISSION?

ACT 3, SCENE 3

A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

Enter CLAUDIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN

CLAUDIUS

I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
to let his madness range. Therefore prepare you,
and he to England shall along with you.
The terms of our estate may not endure
hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow
out of his lunacies.

GUILDENSTERN

We will ourselves provide.

CLAUDIUS

Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage.

ROSENCRANTZ GUILDENSTERN

We will haste us.

Exit ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN. Enter POLONIUS

POLONIUS

My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:
Behind the arras I'll convey myself,
To hear the process; and warrant she'll tax him home:
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

CLAUDIUS

Thanks, dear my lord.

Exit POLONIUS

O, my offence is rank it smells to heaven.
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
a brother's murder. Pray can I not,

though inclination be as sharp as will:
my stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
and, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
and both neglect. What if this cursed hand
were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
but to confront the visage of offence?
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
can serve my turn? "*Forgive me my foul murder?*"
That cannot be, since I am still possessed
of those effects for which I did the murder:
my crown, mine own ambition and my queen.
May one be pardoned and retain the offence?
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
O liméd soul, that, struggling to be free,
art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees, and, heart with strings of steel,
be soft as sinews of the newborn babe!
All may be well.

CLAUDIUS kneels. Enter HAMLET

HAMLET

Now might I do it pat, now he is praying.
And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven,
and so am I revenged. That would be scanned.
A villain kills my father, and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
to heaven.
O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread,
with all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May.
And am I then revenged,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?

No!

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent:
when he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;
then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
and that his soul may be as damned and black
as hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays,
this physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

Exit HAMLET

CLAUDIUS *[Rising]*

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

Exit CLAUDIUS

ACT 3, SCENE 4

THE QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER

Enter GERTRUDE and POLONIUS

POLONIUS

He will come straight. I'll sconce me even here.
Pray you, be round with him.

HAMLET *[offstage]*

Mother, mother, mother!

GERTRUDE

I'll warrant you, fear me not.
Withdraw, I hear him coming.

POLONIUS hides. Enter HAMLET

HAMLET

Now, mother, what's the matter?

GERTRUDE

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET

Mother, you have my father much offended.

GERTRUDE

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

GERTRUDE

Why, how now, Hamlet!

HAMLET

What's the matter now?

GERTRUDE

Have you forgot me?

HAMLET

No, by the rood, not so:

you are the queen, your husband's brother's wife,
And— would it were not so!— you are my mother.

GERTRUDE

Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.

HAMLET

Come, come, and sit you down, you shall not budge.
You go not till I set you up a glass
where you may see the inmost part of you.

GERTRUDE

What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!

POLONIUS *[from behind]*

What, ho! Help, help, help!

HAMLET

How now! A rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!

HAMLET stabs POLONIUS through the curtain

POLONIUS *[from behind]*

O, I am slain!

GERTRUDE

O me, what hast thou done?

HAMLET

Nay, I know not. Is it the king?

GERTRUDE

O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAMLET

A bloody deed! Almost as bad, good mother,
as kill a king, and marry with his brother.

GERTRUDE

As kill a king!

HAMLET

Ay, lady, 'twas my word.

Discovers POLONIUS

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better, take thy fortune.
Leave wringing of your hands, peace! Sit you down,
and let me wring your heart, for so I shall,
if it be made of penetrable stuff.

GERTRUDE

What have I done, that thou darest wag thy tongue
in noise so rude against me?

HAMLET

Such an act
that blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
makes marriage-vows as false as dicers' oaths.

GERTRUDE

Ay me, what act,
that roars so loud, and thunders in the index?

HAMLET

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
the counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow:

this was your husband. Look you now, what follows:
here is your husband, like a mildewed ear,
blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
and batten on this moor? Ha! Have you eyes?

GERTRUDE

O Hamlet, speak no more:
thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,
and there I see such black and grainéd spots
as will not leave their tinct.

HAMLET

Nay, but to live
in the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,
stewed in corruption, honeying and making love
over the nasty sty—

GERTRUDE

O, speak to me no more.
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears.

HAMLET

A king of shreds and patches—

Enter GHOST

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
you heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?

GERTRUDE

Alas, he's mad!

HAMLET

Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
that, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
the important acting of your dread command? O, say!

GHOST

Do not forget: this visitation
is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look, amazement on thy mother sits.
O, step between her and her fighting soul.
Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAMLET

How is it with you, lady?

GERTRUDE

Alas, how is't with you,
that you do bend your eye on vacancy
and with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

HAMLET

Do you see nothing there?

GERTRUDE

Nothing at all, yet all that is I see.

HAMLET

Nor did you nothing hear?

GERTRUDE

No, nothing but ourselves.

HAMLET

Why, look you there! Look, how it steals away!
My father, in his habit as he lived!
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

Exit GHOST

GERTRUDE

This the very coinage of your brain,
this bodiless creation ecstasy
is very cunning in.

HAMLET

Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
and makes as healthful music. It is not madness
that I have uttered, nay, for love of grace,
lay not that mattering unction to your soul,
that not your trespass, but my madness speaks.

GERTRUDE

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

HAMLET

O, throw away the worser part of it,
and live the purer with the other half.
Good night, but go not to mine uncle's bed.
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
I must be cruel, only to be kind.

GERTRUDE

What shall I do?

HAMLET

Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;
and let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
make you to ravel all this matter out:
that I essentially am not in madness,
but mad in craft.

GERTRUDE

Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,
and breath of life, I have no life to breathe
what thou hast said to me.

HAMLET

I must to England, you know that?

GERTRUDE

Alack, I had forgot:
'tis so concluded on.

HAMLET

There's letters sealed, and my two schoolfellows,
whom I will trust as I will adders fanged,
they bear the mandate. For this same lord,
I do repent, but heaven hath pleased it so,
to punish me with this and this with me.
I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room.
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.
Good night, mother.

*Exit HAMLET dragging POLONIUS.
Enter CLAUDIUS.*

CLAUDIUS

There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves.
You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them.
Where is your son?

GERTRUDE

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen tonight!

CLAUDIUS

What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

GERTRUDE

Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend
which is the mightier. In his lawless fit,
behind the arras hearing something stir,
whips out his rapier, cries, "*a rat, a rat!*"
and, in this brainish apprehension, kills
the unseen good old man.

CLAUDIUS

O heavy deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there.
His liberty is full of threats to all:
to you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
should have kept short, restrained and out of haunt,
this mad young man. Where is he gone?

GERTRUDE

To draw apart the body he hath killed.

CLAUDIUS

O Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
but we will ship him hence. O, come away!
my soul is full of discord and dismay.

Exit CLAUDIUS & GERTRUDE

ACT 4, SCENE 1

A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

Enter HAMLET

HAMLET
Safely stowed.

GUILDENSTERN *[offstage]*
Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

HAMLET
What noise? Who calls on Hamlet?
O, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN

ROSENCRANTZ
What have you done, my lord, with the dead body? Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence and bear it to the chapel.

HAMLET
Do not believe it.

ROSENCRANTZ
Believe what?

HAMLET
That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge!

ROSENCRANTZ
Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

HAMLET
Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities.

GUILDENSTERN
My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

HAMLET

The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing—

GUILDENSTERN

A thing, my lord!

HAMLET

Of nothing.

Enter CLAUDIUS and ATTENDANTS

CLAUDIUS

How now! What hath befall'n?

ROSENCRANTZ

Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord, we cannot get from him.

CLAUDIUS

Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

HAMLET

At supper.

CLAUDIUS

At supper! Where?

HAMLET

Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. A certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him.

CLAUDIUS

Alas, alas!

HAMLET

A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

CLAUDIUS

What dost you mean by this? Where is Polonius?

HAMLET

In heaven. Send hither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

CLAUDIUS

Go seek him there.

Exit ATTENDANTS

HAMLET

He will stay till ye come.

CLAUDIUS

This deed which thou hast done must send thee hence with fiery quickness. Every thing is bent for England.

HAMLET

For England!

CLAUDIUS

Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET

Good.

CLAUDIUS

So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

HAMLET

Farewell, dear mother. Come, for England!

Exit HAMLET

CLAUDIUS

Follow him at foot, tempt him with speed aboard,
delay it not, I'll have him hence tonight.

*Exit ROSENCRANTZ
and GUILDENSTERN*

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught
thou mayst not coldly set
our sovereign process, which imports at full,
the present death of Hamlet. Do it, England,
for like the hectic in my blood he rages,
and thou must cure me. Till I know 'tis done,
howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

Exit CLAUDIUS

ACT 4, SCENE 2

A ROOM IN THE CASTLE.

Enter GERTRUDE and ATTENDANT

GERTRUDE

I will not speak with her.

ATTENDANT

She is importunate, indeed distract,
her mood will needs be pitied.

GERTRUDE

What would she have?

ATTENDANT

She speaks much of her father, hems, and beats her heart,
spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt,
which, as her winks, and nods and gestures yield them,
indeed would make one think there might be thought,
though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

GERTRUDE

Let her come in.

Enter OPHELIA

OPHELIA

Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

GERTRUDE

How now, Ophelia!

OPHELIA *[singing]*

How should I your true love know

From another one?

By his cockle hat and staff,

And his sandal shoon.

GERTRUDE

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA

Say you? Nay, pray you, mark.

[singing]

He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone;

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

Enter CLAUDIUS

GERTRUDE

Alas, look here, my lord.

CLAUDIUS

How do you, pretty lady?

OPHELIA

Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

[singing]

Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day,

All in the morning betime,

And I a maid at your window,

To be your Valentine.

Then up he rose, and donned his clothes,

And dupp'd the chamber-door;

Let in the maid, that out a maid

Never departed more.

CLAUDIUS

How long hath she been thus?

OPHELIA

I hope all will be well. We must be patient, but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it. And so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies. Good night, good night.

Exit OPHELIA

CLAUDIUS

Follow her close, give her good watch,
I pray you.

Exit ATTENDANT

O, this is the poison of deep grief, it springs
all from her father's death. When sorrows come,
they come not single spies, but in battalions.

A noise offstage. Enter BERNARDO

GERTRUDE

Alack, what noise is this?

CLAUDIUS

What is the matter?

BERNARDO

Save yourself, my lord.
The ocean, overpeering of his list,
eats not the flats with more impetuous haste
than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
o'erbears your officers.

Enter LAERTES, armed. SOLDIERS following.

LAERTES

Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all without.
I thank you, keep the door. O thou vile king,
give me my father!

GERTRUDE

Calmly, good Laertes.

LAERTES

That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard,
cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot
even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow
of my true mother.

CLAUDIUS

Let him go, Gertrude, do not fear our person.
Tell me, Laertes, why thou art thus incensed.
Let him go, Gertrude. Speak, man.

LAERTES

Where is my father?

CLAUDIUS

Dead.

GERTRUDE

But not by him.

LAERTES

How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with.
To hell, allegiance! Vows, to the blackest devil!
Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged
most thoroughly for my father.

CLAUDIUS

Good Laertes,
if you desire to know the certainty
of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,
that, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
winner and loser?

LAERTES

None but his enemies.

CLAUDIUS

Will you know them then?

That I am guiltless of your father's death,
and am most sensible in grief for it,
it shall as level to your judgment pierce
as day does to your eye.

Enter OPHELIA, singing.

LAERTES

How now! what noise is that?

OPHELIA *[singing]*

*They bore him barefaced on the bier,
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny,
And in his grave rained many a tear,
Fare you well, my dove!*

LAERTES

Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens! Is't possible, a young maid's wits
should be as mortal as an old man's life?

OPHELIA

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance. Pray, love, remember. And there
is pansies. That's for thoughts.

LAERTES

A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

OPHELIA

There's fennel for you, and columbines. There's rue for you; and here's
some for me. I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my
father died

[singing]
And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.

Exit OPHELIA

LAERTES

Do you see this, O God?

CLAUDIUS

Laertes, I must commune with your grief.
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
and we shall jointly labor with your soul
to give it due content.

LAERTES

Let this be so.
His means of death, his obscure funeral,
cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
that I must call't in question.

CLAUDIUS

So you shall,
And where the offence is let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me.

Exit CLAUDIUS and LAERTES

ACT 4, SCENE 3

A PLAIN IN DENMARK

Enter FORTINBRAS and CAPTAIN

FORTINBRAS

Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king.
Tell him that, by his license, Fortinbras
craves the conveyance of a promised march
over his kingdom.

CAPTAIN

I will do't, my lord.

*Exit FORTINBRAS, CAPTAIN remains
Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN.*

HAMLET

Good sir, whose powers are these?

CAPTAIN

They are of Norway, sir.

HAMLET

How purposed, sir, I pray you?

CAPTAIN

Against some part of Poland.

HAMLET

Who commands them, sir?

CAPTAIN

The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

HAMLET

Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
or for some frontier?

CAPTAIN

Truly to speak, and with no addition,
we go to gain a little patch of ground
that hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it,
nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
a ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

HAMLET

Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

CAPTAIN

Yes. It is already garrisoned.
God be wi' you, sir.

Exit CAPTAIN

ROSENCRANTZ

Wilt please you go, my lord?

HAMLET

I'll be with you straight, go a little before.

Exit ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN

How all occasions do inform against me,
and spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
if his chief good and market of his time
be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
looking before and after, gave us not
that capability and god-like reason
to fust in us unused. Rightly to be great
is not to stir without great argument,
but greatly to find quarrel in a straw
when honor's at the stake. How stand I then,
that have a father killed, a mother stained,
excitements of my reason and my blood,
and let all sleep? While, to my shame, I see

the imminent death of twenty thousand men,
that, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
which is not tomb enough and continent
to hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
my thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

Exit HAMLET

ACT 4, SCENE 4

A ROOM IN THE CASTLE.

Enter CLAUDIUS and LAERTES

CLAUDIUS

Now must you put me in your heart for friend.
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
that he which hath your noble father slain
pursued my life.

LAERTES

And so have I a noble father lost,
A sister driven into desperate terms,
but my revenge will come.

Enter MARCELLUS

CLAUDIUS

How now! What news?

MESSENGER

Letters, my lord, from Hamlet.
This to your majesty, this to the queen.

Exit MESSENGER

CLAUDIUS

Laertes, you shall hear them.

[reading] "High and mighty, You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. Tomorrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes, when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return. -Hamlet."

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?

LAERTES

I'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come.
It warms the very sickness in my heart,
that I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
"thus didest thou."

CLAUDIUS

If it be so, Laertes,
as how should it be so? How otherwise?
Will you be ruled by me?

LAERTES

Ay, my lord,
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

CLAUDIUS

To thine own peace. I will work him
to an exploit, now ripe in my device,
under the which he shall not choose but fall,
and for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
but even his mother shall uncharge the practice
and call it accident.

LAERTES

My lord, I will be ruled,
the rather, if you could devise it so
that I might be the organ.

CLAUDIUS

It falls right.
You have been talked of since your travel much,
and given such a masterly report
for art and exercise in your defense,
and for your rapier most especially.
Hamlet, returned, shall know you are come home.
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence
and wager on your heads. He, being remiss,
most generous and free from all contriving,
will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,
or with a little shuffling, you may choose
a sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
requite him for your father.

LAERTES

I will do't.

And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
with this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
it may be death.

CLAUDIUS

Let's further think of this:

When in your motion you are hot and dry--
and that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him
a chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
if he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
our purpose may hold there.

Enter GERTRUDE

How now, sweet queen!

GERTRUDE

One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
so fast they follow. Your sister's drowned, Laertes.

LAERTES

Drowned! O, where?

GERTRUDE

There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
that shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.
There with fantastic garlands did she come
of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples
that our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.
There, on the pendent boughs, her coronet weeds
clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke,
when down her weedy trophies and herself
fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide
and, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up,
which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,

as one incapable of her own distress,
till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
to muddy death.

LAERTES

Alas, then, she is drowned?

GERTRUDE

Drowned, drowned.

LAERTES

Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
and therefore I forbid my tears. But yet
it is our trick, nature her custom holds.
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
but that this folly douts it.

Exit LAERTES

CLAUDIUS

Let's follow, Gertrude.
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I this will give it start again.
Therefore let's follow.

Exit CLAUDIUS and GERTRUDE

ACT 5, SCENE 1

A CHURCHYARD

Enter two GRAVEDIGGERS

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

SECOND GRAVEDIGGER

I tell thee she is, and therefore make her grave straight.

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defense?

SECOND GRAVEDIGGER

Why, 'tis found so. Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

Why, there thou sayest. And the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. I'll put another question to thee. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

SECOND GRAVEDIGGER

Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

SECOND GRAVEDIGGER

Marry, now I can tell.

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

To't.

SECOND GRAVEDIGGER

Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating, and, when you are asked this question next, say "a grave-maker: the houses that he makes last till doomsday."

Go, fetch me a stoup of liquor.

Exit SECOND GRAVEDIGGER.

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER sings.

*In youth, when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet,
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,
O, methought, there was nothing meet.*

HAMLET

Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

HORATIO

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

GRAVEDIGGER throws a skull

HAMLET

That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once. How the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder!

HORATIO

Ay, my lord.

HAMLET

I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

Mine, sir.

HAMLET

I think it be thine, indeed, for thou liest in't.

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours. For my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

HAMLET

Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine. 'Tis for the dead, not for the quick. Therefore thou liest.

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

'Tis a quick lie, sir, 'twill away gain, from me to you.

HAMLET

What man dost thou dig it for?

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

For no man, sir.

HAMLET

What woman, then?

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

For none, neither.

HAMLET

Who is to be buried in't?

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

One that was a woman, sir, but, rest her soul, she's dead.

HAMLET

How absolute the knave is! How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

Of all the days i' the year, I came to't, it was the very day that young Hamlet was born. He that is mad, and sent into England.

HAMLET

Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

Why, because he was mad. He shall recover his wits there. Or, if he do not, 'twill not be seen in him there. There the men are as mad as he.

HAMLET

How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

I' faith, if he be not rotten before he die, he will last you some eight year or nine year. Here's a skull now, has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

HAMLET

Whose was it?

FIRST GRAVEDIGGER

This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

HAMLET

Let me see. Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy, he hath borne me on his back a thousand times. And now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! Where be your gibes now? Your gambols? Your songs? Your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HORATIO

What's that, my lord?

HAMLET

Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

HORATIO

E'en so.

HAMLET

To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust. The dust is earth, of earth we make loam, and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel? But soft! Aside, here comes the king.

*Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, LAERTES and ATTENDANTS
in funeral procession. HAMLET and HORATIO hide.*

LAERTES

What ceremony else?

PRIEST

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
as we have warranties. Her death was doubtful,
and, but that great command o'ersways the order,
she should in ground unsanctified have lodged

LAERTES

Must there no more be done?

PRIEST

No more be done.

LAERTES

Lay her i' the earth,
and from her fair and unpolluted flesh
may violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
a ministering angel shall my sister be,
when thou liest howling.

HAMLET

What, the fair Ophelia!

GERTRUDE [*scattering flowers*]

Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife,
I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,
and not have strewed thy grave.

LAERTES

O, treble woe

fall ten times treble on that curséd head,
whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
deprived thee of! Hold off the earth awhile,
till I have caught her once more in mine arms.

LAERTES leaps into the grave. Enter HAMLET

HAMLET

What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? Whose phrase of sorrow
conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand
like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane.

HAMLET leaps into the grave

LAERTES

The devil take thy soul!

HAMLET

I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat,
for, though I am not splenitive and rash,
yet have I something in me dangerous,
which let thy wiseness fear. Hold off thy hand.

CLAUDIUS

Pluck them asunder.

GERTRUDE

Hamlet, Hamlet!

HORATIO

Good my lord, be quiet.

ATTENDANTS part them, and they come out of the grave

HAMLET

Why I will fight with him upon this theme
until my eyelids will no longer wag.

GERTRUDE

O my son, what theme?

HAMLET

I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers
could not, with all their quantity of love,
make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

CLAUDIUS

O, he is mad, Laertes.

GERTRUDE

For love of God, forbear him.

HAMLET

'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do,
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?
to outface me with leaping in her grave?
be buried quick with her, and so will I,
I'll rant as well as thou.

GERTRUDE

This is mere madness.

HAMLET

Hear you, sir,

What is the reason that you use me thus?

I loved you ever, but it is no matter.

Let Hercules himself do what he may,

The cat will mew and dog will have his day.

Exit HAMLET

CLAUDIUS

I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.

Exit HORATIO

Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech.

We'll put the matter to the present push.

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.

an hour of quiet shortly shall we see.

Till then, in patience our proceeding be.

Exit ALL

ACT 5, SCENE 2

A HALL IN CASTLE

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO

HAMLET

Ere we were two days old at sea,
my fears forgetting manners, I unsealed
their grand commission, where I found, Horatio,
O royal knavery! An exact command,
that, on the supervise, no leisure bated,
no, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
my head should be struck off.

HORATIO

Is't possible?

HAMLET

Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,
they had begun the play. I sat me down,
devised a new commission. Wilt thou know
the effect of what I wrote?

HORATIO

Ay, good my lord.

HAMLET

An earnest conjuration from the king,
as England was his faithful tributary,
that, on the view and knowing of these contents,
he should the bearers put to sudden death.

HORATIO

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

HAMLET

Why, man, they did make love to this employment.
They are not near my conscience, their defeat
does by their own insinuation grow.

HORATIO

Peace! Who comes here?

Enter OSRIC

OSRIC

Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAMLET

I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this water-fly?

HORATIO

No, my good lord.

OSRIC

Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you
from his majesty.

HAMLET

I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right
use, 'tis for the head.

OSRIC

I thank your lordship, it is very hot. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify
to you that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, here is newly come
to court Laertes, believe me, an absolute gentleman, he is the card or
calendar of gentry.

HAMLET

The concernancy, sir? Why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer
breath?

OSRIC
Sir?

HAMLET
What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

OSRIC
Of Laertes?

HORATIO
The purse is empty already, all's golden words are spent.

OSRIC
The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits, and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

HAMLET
Sir, I will walk here in the hall, if it please his majesty, 'tis the breathing time of day with me. Let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose.

OSRIC
Shall I redeliver you e'en so?

HAMLET
To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

OSRIC
I commend my duty to your lordship.

Exit OSRIC

HORATIO
You will lose this wager, my lord.

HAMLET

I do not think so, since he went into France, I have been in continual practice. I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart. But it is no matter.

HORATIO

If your mind dislike any thing, obey it. I will forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

HAMLET

Not a whit, we defy augury. There's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all. Since no man of aught of he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.

*Enter CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, LAERTES,
OSRIC, and ATTENDANTS*

CLAUDIUS

Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

HAMLET

Give me your pardon, sir. What I have done,
that might your nature, honor and exception
roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet.
Who does it, then? His madness. If't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged.

LAERTES

I am satisfied in nature,
whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
to my revenge. But in my terms of honor
I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation,
but do receive your offered love like love,
and will not wrong it.

HAMLET

I embrace it freely.
Give us the foils. Come on.

LAERTES

Come, one for me.

CLAUDIUS

Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager?

HAMLET

Very well, my lord
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

CLAUDIUS

I do not fear it, I have seen you both.
But since he is bettered, we have therefore odds.

LAERTES

This is too heavy, let me see another.

HAMLET

This likes me well. These foils have all a length?

OSRIC

Ay, my good lord.

CLAUDIUS

Set me the stoops of wine upon that table.
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

HAMLET

Come on, sir.

LAERTES
Come, my lord.

They play

HAMLET
One.

LAERTES
No.

HAMLET
Judgment.

OSRIC
A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAERTES
Well, again.

CLAUDIUS
Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine:
here's to thy health. Give him the cup.

HAMLET
I'll play this bout first, set it by awhile. Come.

They play

Another hit, what say you?

LAERTES
A touch, a touch, I do confess.

GERTRUDE
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

HAMLET
Good madam!

CLAUDIUS

Gertrude, do not drink.

GERTRUDE

I will, my lord, I pray you, pardon me.

CLAUDIUS *[aside]*

It is the poisoned cup, it is too late.

HAMLET

I dare not drink yet, madam, by and by.
Come, for the third, Laertes. You but dally,
I pray you, pass with your best violence.

LAERTES

Say you so? Come on.
Have at you now!

*LAERTES wounds HAMLET, then in scuffling,
they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES*

CLAUDIUS

Part them, they are incensed.

HAMLET

Nay, come, again.

GERTRUDE falls

OSRIC

Look to the queen there, ho!

HORATIO

They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

OSRIC

How is't, Laertes?

LAERTES

Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric,
I am justly killed with mine own treachery.

HAMLET

How does the queen?

CLAUDIUS

She swounds to see them bleed.

GERTRUDE

No, no, the drink, the drink,--O my dear Hamlet,--
The drink, the drink! I am poisoned.

GERTRUDE dies

HAMLET

O villainy! Ho! Let the door be locked.
Treachery! Seek it out.

LAERTES

It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain.
In thee there is not half an hour of life.
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
unbated and envenomed. The foul practice
hath turned itself on me lo, here I lie,
never to rise again. Thy mother's poisoned,
I can no more. The king, the king's to blame.

HAMLET

The point envenomed too!
Then, venom, to thy work.

HAMLET stabs CLAUDIUS

ATTENDANTS

Treason! Treason!

CLAUDIUS

O, yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt.

HAMLET

Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,
drink off this potion. Is thy union here?
Follow my mother.

CLAUDIUS dies

LAERTES

He is justly served,
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
nor thine on me.

LAERTES dies

HAMLET

Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.

From offstage, the sound of gunshots.

What warlike noise is this?

OSRIC

Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland.

HAMLET

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
that are but mutes or audience to this act,
had I but time— as this fell sergeant, death,
is strict in his arrest— O, I could tell you—
but let it be. Horatio, I am dead.
I cannot live to hear the news from England,
but I do prophesy the election lights
on Fortinbras. He has my dying voice.
Thou livest, report me and my cause aright
to the unsatisfied. The rest is silence.

HAMLET dies

HORATIO

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince:
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

Enter FORTINBRAS and CAPTAIN

CAPTAIN

Where is this sight?

HORATIO

What is it ye would see?

If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search,
and let me speak to the yet unknowing world
how these things came about. So shall you hear
of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,
and, in this upshot, purposes mistook,
fallen on the inventors' heads. All this can I
truly deliver.

PRINCE FORTINBRAS

Let us haste to hear it,
and call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune:
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage,
for he was likely, had he been put on,
to have proved most royally. Such a sight as this
becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

*Exit all, bearing off the dead bodies
after which a peal of gunshots is heard.*

END OF PLAY